

Town of Primrose Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee Minutes for October 26, 2009.

Attending: Dein, Elkins, Garfoot, Gibson, Haack, Hayward, and J. Judd.

Meeting called to order at 7:35 by Dein

1. Motion to approve the minutes of October 19<sup>th</sup> made by Garfoot, seconded by Hayward. Motion carried 6-0.

2. Presentation by Brian Standing on various layers for “Environmental Resource Protection Areas”.

---Standing presented a map for an expanded resource protection area that included the Core environmental resource protection zone, Group III Soils, and Woodlands. The majority of land that would then be developable would be in the Western half of the Township. The inclusion of woods were those with 80% canopy that were 20 acres more of contiguous woods. The purpose of such a restriction would be to preserve habitat for a number of species that require dense layer of interior forests.

---We might also protect woodlands by having restrictions on vegetation removal when houses are built. That does not preclude management of woodlands and cutting, as it is tied only to building.

--- We might also include siting criteria about ridge top building. Some Townships, such as Vermont, have strict rules, prohibiting the roofline being more than 24 feet above the ridgeline, others such as Berry, have a set of criteria that allow building but in such a way as to minimize the impact of such building, such as not allowing the top of the house to be above the top of the hill.

--- Standing said that he does yet have an accurate map of pastureland and so can't provide an inventory of builds that would be associated with that criterion.

3. The committee discussed various issues still undecided:

(a) Whether to count densities as determined only by contiguous land or instead by non-contiguous land. Standing is going to present numbers about how this would effect the number of builds, but, unless there was a big difference in numbers, we tentatively agreed to leave it the way it was, that densities would be assessed by total land-holdings in 1981 (i.e., non-contiguous).

(b) There was a discussion of whether the all houses on A1 prior to 81— “farmhouses”— should or should not count against densities. That number is 89. The rationale for not counting those houses against densities was questioned. Many, if not most of those houses, are not lived in by farmers. Some were in favor of counting the farmhouse, others in favor of not counting them. Two compromise positions were suggested. (1) Haack suggested that we not count the farmhouse against densities, but to allow the density to be used only as a Transfer of Development Right and (2) Elkins suggested that another compromise would be to strictly tie what counts as a “farmhouse” to language that would

tie them to people actively farming, using language similar to the language defining a farmer that is included in the Retirement Home language in our Plan.

(c) Duplexes— There was a consensus that we should allow Duplexes, but that two density units would have to be used and there were certain restrictions that apply. Standing was going to incorporate the language the Planning Commission adopted about Duplexes in its 2005 proposed revision to the Land Use Plan.

(d) Transfer of Development Rights— There was a long discussion of the merits of transferring development rights *within* the Township. The way Standing now has the draft written is to allow TDRs within the Township, so that a person owning 300 acres of good farmland in one place in the Township and 30 acres of poor land in another part of the Township could transfer all his or her builds from the 300 acres to the 30. Several people said they were against this idea. It would concentrate building largely in the Western part of the Township on hilly, ridge land. It would be a major change for our residents regarding how much building might occur next to them, and the majority of our residents wanted slow growth. Others supported the idea, saying it would be a good way of protecting agricultural land while allowing building. Generally, it was thought that it would be difficult to quickly come up with criteria and that this should be looked at in conjunction with the County's proposal regarding Transfer of Development rights which would allow the rights to be transferred *outside* of the Township.

(e) Substandard Parcel — Currently our Plan is more lenient than what the County requires, allowing two builds where the County says we must allow one build. Standing has changed this policy in his draft, so that Substandard Parcels would have only one build.

(f) The next meeting was set for November 18<sup>th</sup>. Standing will submit any additional revisions he has made before then, and supply us with any new information he has.

#### Public Comments:

---The Committee keeps talking about whether the "farm house" should or should not count against density. The exception to the density is to *all* residences in A1 exclusive built prior to 1981, so it is not just farm houses.

--- If development rights are transferred to another Township, where does the tax income go? Consider whether the Town will come up short in such a transfer.

--- There are approximately 400 builds, but in 81 the Township rounded up and in 94 they did not.

--- There is nothing in the current draft about retirement homes for farmers.

--- People who come out here and buy land don't have a right to a scenic easement.

---Anytime "compromise" is talked about, people want the large landowners to give something up.

--- If we want to have an agricultural community, small landowners don't get the right to say who can do what.

---Change comes, life goes on when new houses are built.

- Question whether TDRs outside the Township is viable.
- Question about the Website— is having problems posting anonymously on the Town Square.'
- On page 11 of the current draft, (b) needs clarification. Can farm buildings be in Environmental Resource Protection Areas?
- If the Town does not want to implement TDR's now, can work on this later.
- Can the maps be put on the Website. Standing replied that all but the most recent ones were on the Website.
- What will implementing Environmental Resource Protection areas do to the status of existing homes?

Public Comment Closed:

4. Motion to adjourn made by Gibson, seconded by Elkins. Motion carried. 7-0.